

October 25, 2007

To: Jeff Anderson and  
Legislative Committee Members:

The staff at the Family Resource Center (FRC) has had the privilege to attend the two home based child care committee meetings recently held in Des Moines. The FRC collaborates with three Empowerment projects. Each project employs a child care home evaluator who conducts unannounced visits to all Registered Child Development Homes in their respective counties. The Empowerment areas along with the date they began conducting unannounced visits are as follows:

- Linking Families Empowerment – Pocahontas, Calhoun and Webster counties - Summer of 2006.
- Building Families Empowerment – Hamilton, Humboldt and Wright counties - Summer of 2005
- Partnerships 4 Families – Audubon, Carroll, Greene and Guthrie counties - March of 2000.

Linking Families and Partnerships 4 Families Empowerment areas also employ Home Consultants who visit and introduce the checklist to providers upon initial registration.

The goal for the Child Care Home Evaluators is to visit 100% of the registered providers each year. During each visit, the evaluator completes the DHS Checklist for Child Development Home Registration. Providers who are not 100% compliant with the checklist receive follow up visits to work toward reaching complete compliance. After each visit a letter is written to the provider outlining corrections that need to be made to meet compliance. A copy of the checklist completed at the time of the visit is included. A copy of the letter and the completed checklist is also sent to the local DHS office.

If during a visit, a provider is found to be over the allowable number of children in care or if imminent danger to children is observed, DHS is notified of the situation.

You had asked for suggestions for changes and improvements to the DHS checklist from the child care providers in attendance at the last committee meeting. Due to the amount of experience we have had over the past 2-7 years using the DHS checklist with hundreds of child care providers each year, we felt you might appreciate our input as well. We are offering the following suggestions:

- Page 1 under 110.5 - We suggest adding a specific section on hand washing, diapering procedures, and also suggestions for safe napping recommendations.
- Page 3 - We suggest this be stated as: a 2A 10BC rated fire extinguisher is in a visible and readily accessible place on each child-occupied floor. Please also consider the importance of requiring fire extinguishers be checked and tagged yearly by a qualified professional for proper functioning. This is currently not required by the state.
- Pages 3 & 4 letters r and s – We suggest eliminating above or below ground pools from all child development homes due to the hazards they pose and the lifesaving equipment required –wading pools would be acceptable.  
If pools cannot be completely eliminated from the checklist, please list specific equipment needed to rescue a child or adult. (letter s)
- Page 4 letter b – We suggest that the checklist state: Providers must complete a first aid course and CPR course that includes infant CPR from a state approved curriculum. (there is no longer a course that includes just mouth-to-mouth resuscitation).
- Page 4 - The injury report is listed in two different areas on the checklist. Our suggestion is to eliminate this one (page 4) – under letter w. It is also listed on page 8 under letter j. The injury report form is a requirement in the children's file. We feel it best fits in this section.

- Page 5 – letter c – relates to staff assistants. Assistants are only allowed for Category B homes. We ask that this section be moved to the Category B requirements on page 9. At times there is confusion as to which providers are allowed to have staff assistants.
- Page 5 letter d and Page 8 110.5 should be combined as it all relates to substitute care. It makes sense to put these two areas together.
- Page 8 – letter c - We suggest adding the word “nurturing” to: gives consistent, dependable care. Some examples to measure nurturing might be:
  - Infants are held while feeding, bottles are not propped
  - Children are not confined to swings, car seats, or playpens for extended periods of time.
  - Providers are attentive to children’s needs in a timely fashion.
  - Treats children with respect.
- Page 8 Letter i –We suggest adding information regarding the inclement weather form. (There currently is not an inclement weather form listed on the checklist but it is required in the Child Development Home Registration Guidelines Book on page 14 which states: “The signed parental consent form for additional children to be present during emergency school closing should be included in this file also.”)
- Page 9 – 110.8 (2) Category A - Remove the final two items as they are required on the registration application and would have been completed in order for the provider to be registered
- Page 10 - 110.2 Remove items a-b and c – This information is required on the registration application and would have been completed in order for the provider to be registered.
- Page 11 – 110.10 (2) Providers’ requirements again can be removed as these were completed on registration application. (See enclosed registration application form.)

- PP.11&12 Add a section for the co-provider information under Category C. Currently there is not a space to document required information on the co-provider.

We appreciate your time and consideration in updating the DHS checklist. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Family Resource Center at 1-800-999-5101.

In addition, we are in full support of mandating all homes providing child care to be registered with the State of Iowa to ensure that they are providing safe, healthy, nurturing environments. We also appreciate that the committee is looking at lowering the number of children being cared for in non-registered homes to three children. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeanie Running  
Lou Ann Mowrey  
Family Resource Center Directors

And The  
Family Resource Center Child Care Staff